DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 472 152 PS 030 487

TITLE	Smart Start's Impact on North Carolina's Children, Families, & Communities.
INSTITUTION	North Carolina Partnership for Children, Raleigh.
PUB DATE	2002-06-00
NOTE	33p.; Printing for this publication was funded by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina.
AVAILABLE FROM	Smart Start, North Carolina Partnership for Children, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh, NC 27604. Tel: 800-367-2229 (Toll Free); Tel: 919-821-7999; Fax: 919-821-8050; Web site: http://www.smartstart-nc.org.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Child Care; *Child Health; Community Benefits; *Early Intervention; *Family Programs; Family Support; Models; Partnerships in Education; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; *School Readiness; State Programs
IDENTIFIERS	Day Care Quality; *Program Characteristics; *Smart Start NC; Subsidized Child Care Services

ABSTRACT

Smart Start is North Carolina's model early childhood initiative to help all North Carolina children enter school healthy and prepared for success. Serving all 100 counties in the state, Smart Start's services include child care subsidies and health and family support services. This report describes the program, focusing on its impact on the state's children, families, and communities. The report emphasizes that Smart Start improves children's school readiness, supports children with special needs, and improves access to children's health services. In addition, the program provides families with child care assistance, provides families more child care choices, and provides support to families of young children. With regard to child care quality, Smart Start has been shown to improve access to high quality child care, improve the quality of child care, improve teacher education, and improve child care teacher retention. The report emphasizes the need to improve early childhood wages. Also noted is the community impact of the initiative in terms of improved collaboration and coordination of child and family services, and improved quality and economy of North Carolina communities. In sidebars throughout the report, local Smart Start accomplishments are highlighted. The report concludes with a list of contributors to the public-private partnership. (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

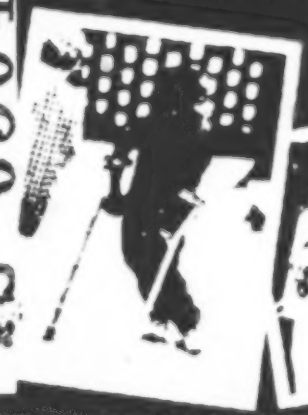
ED 472 152

Smart Start's

Impact

on North Carolina's Children Families & Communities

PS 030487



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

The printing of this publication is funded by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina

smart START

www.ncsmartstart.org

Vision

Smart Start is North Carolina's nationally recognized early childhood initiative designed to ensure that all children under the age of six are healthy and prepared for success when they enter school.

Smart Start provides access to high-quality child care, health care and family services to all children and families in North Carolina.

Smart Start was established in 1993 by the North Carolina General Assembly. In the first year of operation, the North Carolina General Assembly appropriated $20 million in state funds for 18 counties. Since then, Smart Start has expanded to 82 local partnerships serving all 100 counties in North Carolina and is funded at $220 million.

Created as a public/private partnership, Smart Start has raised more than $120 million in private donations since 1995.

There are 695,028 children, under the age of six, in North Carolina. ①

Recognition

Smart Start is considered a national model for comprehensive early childhood education initiatives and has received two national awards recognizing its work to improve the well-being of young children.

- In 1998, Smart Start received the Innovations in American Government Award from the Ford Foundation and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.
- In 1999, Smart Start was awarded the Innovation in Government Award from the Council of State Governments.
- In 2001, a National Technical Assistance Center was established through foundation grants to assist other states with the development of early education initiatives.

"If a child enters the child care setting at six weeks of age and continues through age five, he/she will spend more time in those five years of child care than they will spend in school during the next 12 years." ②

① Office of State Management and Budget, July 2001 Population Projections
② Judsen Culbreth, Editor-in-Chief, Scholastic Parent Publishing

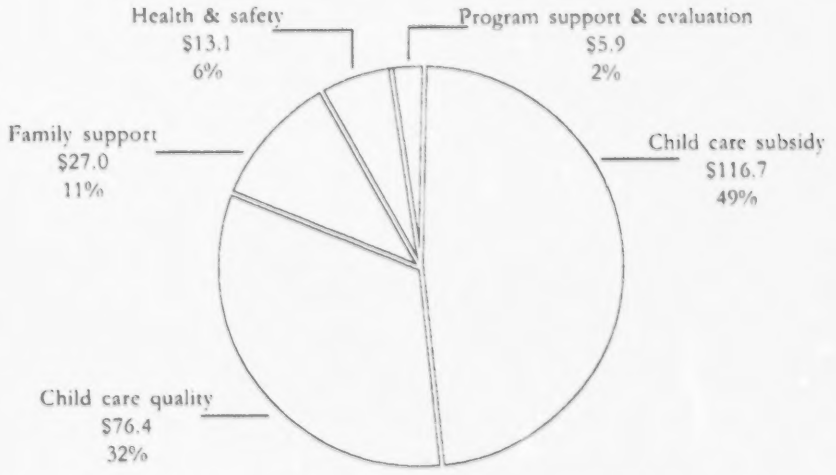
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

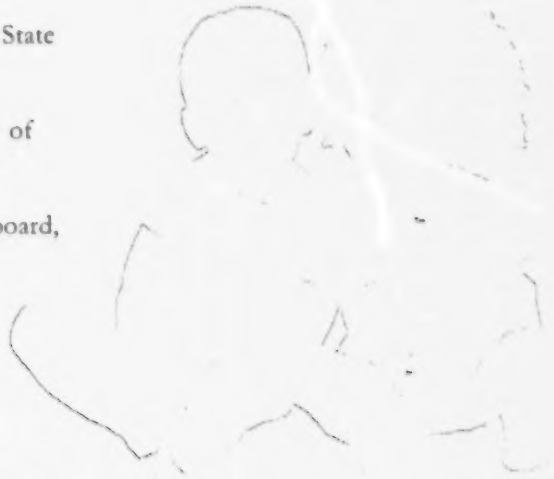
Accountability

Smart Start is held to the highest levels of accountability of any organization in North Carolina.

- ✔ Each year, Smart Start is audited at the state and county levels by North Carolina's State Auditor.
- ✔ Annually, the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill conducts an independent evaluation of Smart Start.
- ✔ All Smart Start activities are approved at three levels - a local committee, the local board, and the North Carolina Partnership for Children.
- ✔ Smart Start is required to meet the same accounting standards as state government, including standards for contracting and bidding.

Expenditures for core services, 2000 - 2001 (in millions)





Smart Start serves all 100 counties in North Carolina. Thirty percent of direct services must be spent on child care subsidies with a total of 70 percent of direct service funds required for child care related activities. The remaining funds may be used for health and family support services. Legislation mandates that Smart Start administration funds are limited to eight percent statewide.

All children

Lisa Reynolds is a Physical Therapist from the Heads Up Specialized Therapy Program - a program funded by Smart Start through the Chatham County Partnership for Children. Here is her story about Harry.

"Harry came to our specialized therapy program three years ago when he was two years old. He was born with Down Syndrome, had heart problems and came to us unable to walk and lacking the motivation to learn. By using horses as a means of physical and communication therapy, Harry not only increased his motor skills but his motivation, too. Harry now attends the Pre-K program at Silk Hope Elementary School and plays happily alongside his typically-developing peers. Even though Harry has 'graduated' from Heads Up, his mother was so impressed with her son's progress through the program that she continues to volunteer at our sessions assisting other students."

Each year, over 100,000 North Carolina children enter kindergarten. ① *Many of these children are not prepared for school and are already developmentally behind their peers.*

✔ Smart Start improves school readiness

Children who attend child care centers that participate in Smart Start quality improvement programs have better cognitive and language skills and fewer behavioral problems than children in centers that do not participate. ②

✔ Smart Start supports children with special needs

Children with special needs are more likely to be in higher quality child care because of Smart Start. ③

From 1994 to 1999, the number of child care facilities enrolling children with special needs increased by 50 percent, thanks to Smart Start training and resources. ③

Smart Start = Progress

"One of the major barriers to including children with special needs in early childhood programs has been the limited number of high quality child care centers in North Carolina. Initiatives like Smart Start, aimed at improving program quality, represent an important step in removing obstacles to achieving high quality care for children with disabilities and their families. Since Smart Start began providing technical assistance and resources to child care centers, the proportion of centers enrolling at least one child with a disability increased from 40% to 59%." ③

① N.C. Public Schools Statistical Profile
② A Six-County Study of the Effects of Smart Start Child Care on Kindergarten Entry Skills, FPG/UNC Evaluation report
③ Smart Start and Quality Inclusive Child Care in N.C., 2000, FPG/UNC Evaluation report

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

All children

Healthy children can focus on learning which is why early detection and treatment of health and developmental problems are crucial to a child's success.

✔ Smart Start improves access to children's health services

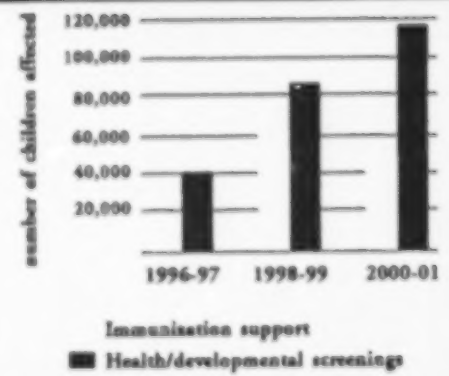
Smart Start children are more likely to be immunized on time. In 2001, more than 50,234 children benefited from Smart Start immunization support services, compared to 8,743 in 1996. ①

Smart Start children are more likely to have a regular source of health care than children who are not receiving Smart Start services. ①

Non-Smart Start children are more likely to use an emergency department as their regular source of health care. ①

The number of children who received Smart Start health and developmental screenings has tripled since 1996 - increasing from 40,000 in 1996 to 120,000 in 2001. ②

Health screenings and immunization support ②



① The Effect of Smart Start Health Interventions on Children's Health and Access to Care, 2001, FPG/UNC Evaluation report
② FPG/UNC Smart Start quarterly report

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Teens 'N' Tots provides family support services to teen parents to reduce the potential for child abuse and neglect among young families. Teens 'N' Tots is funded by Smart Start and the Partnership for Children of Cumberland County. Ednie is a teen mother who's child was born with disabilities. Here is her story.

"The Teens 'N' Tots program is more than a support group for teen moms. The staff are our mentors and role models. Some were even teen moms themselves. The staff at Teens 'N' Tots encourage us to better our lives for the sake of our children. The most fulfilling thing I learned from them were the skills needed to be a good mom. They also helped me get my first job and because of their support and encouragement, I plan to get my GED, go to college to become an English teacher, and continue to volunteer for Teens 'N' Tots to help girls who are going through what I went through. Your world doesn't end when you have a baby at a young age. It's just a new life beginning a little sooner than you thought. But that doesn't have to be a bad thing, especially when there are programs like Teens 'N' Tots. They give young parents an alternative to all the negativity in the world and teach them positive ways to love and care for their children."

All families

Child care expenses can consume a large portion of the family budget. In order to reduce high child care expenses, some parents have had to quit their jobs while others chose to work different shifts, affecting the amount of time a family is able to spend together. ①

✔ **Smart Start provides families with assistance in child care costs**

More than 155,000 working families have received financial assistance to cover part of the costs of child care since Smart Start began in 1993.②

Many working parents say the most important decision they've made about their child's welfare is choosing high quality child care.

✔ **Smart Start provides families with more child care choices**

Local child care resource and referral agencies, funded by Smart Start, educate parents on how to find quality and accessible child care that meets their particular needs.

Smart Start = Progress

Ten years ago, North Carolina parents had two levels of quality child care from which to choose and state child care standards were among the poorest in the country. Today, North Carolina parents have five levels of quality to help them make better choices for their child's care.

① Child Care Expenses by America's Families, Urban Institute
② FPG/UNC Smart Start quarterly report

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

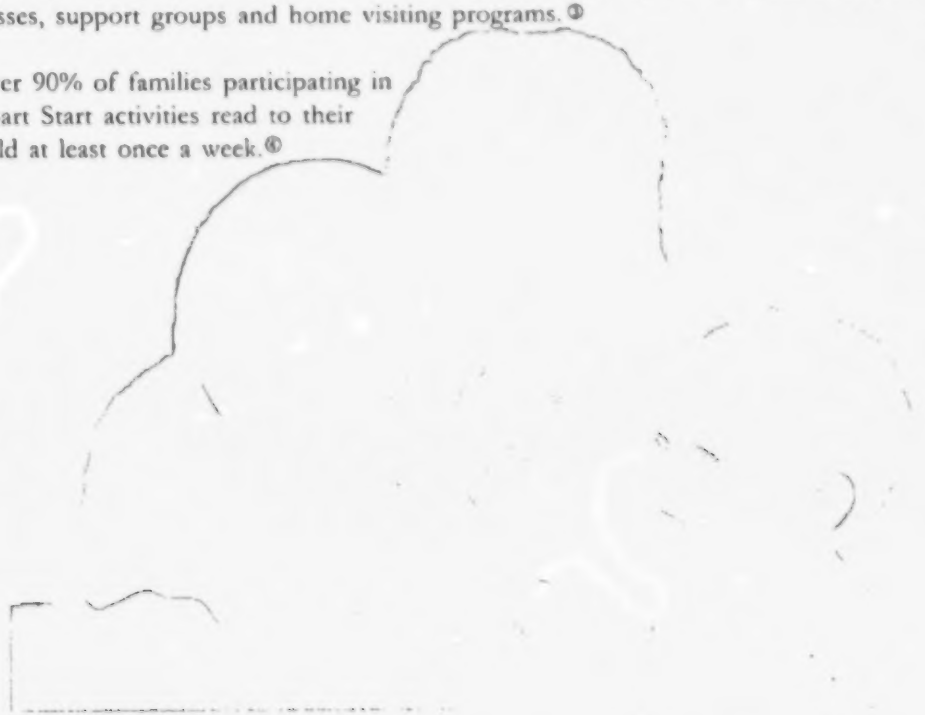
All families

Parenting is a challenging task. Balancing increased work hours with family responsibilities can cause considerable stress on anyone. It is important that parents receive the support they need because families are a child's first and most important teacher.

✔ Smart Start provides support to families of young children

In Fiscal Year 2000-2001, more than 28,700 parents participated in Smart Start parenting classes, support groups and home visiting programs. ③

Over 90% of families participating in Smart Start activities read to their child at least once a week. ④



Long-term effects of family support

A 16-year study revealed that family support services and parental involvement in the classroom have significant long-term benefits for their children. Some of the positive outcomes for the children in the study were:

- 29% increase in the rate of high school graduation;
- 40% decrease in grade retention;
- 40% decrease in special education classes; and,
- 33% reduction in the rate of juvenile arrests. ⑤

③ FPG/UNC Smart Start quarterly report
④ Families and the N.C. Smart Start Initiative, FPG/UNC Evaluation report
⑤ Chicago Longitudinal Study, University of Wisconsin - Madison

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Child care

Due to budget reductions, New Hanover County had to create a waiting list for working families who needed help with child care costs. The New Hanover County Partnership for Children, a local Smart Start agency, collaborated with the community to provide needy families with one-year child care scholarships. Below are excerpts about this story from the Morning Star News, Wilmington, November 20, 2001.

"Sarah Norris, owner of the Total Child Care Center, said by offering scholarships, child care providers are setting a positive example. ... Ms. Norris said concern for the welfare of children is the primary motivator for those centers participating in the program. She said she worries low-income parents may sacrifice quality in a desperate attempt to find child care they can afford.

Janet Nelson, executive director of New Hanover County Partnership for Children, said she hopes ... the public will realize quality child care is a community concern. 'It's important to get the private sectors involved in what is a public dilemma,' she said. 'We're all in this together.'"

Child care is essential in today's economy. With over 70% of North Carolina mothers of young children in the workforce, parents need more options. [1] ***A lack of reliable, affordable, and accessible child care can cause parents to lose time at work and be less productive at their jobs.***

✔ Smart Start improves access to high quality child care

Since Smart Start began in 1993, the number of quality child care centers in North Carolina has risen 283%—from 576 centers in 1993 to 2,210 in 2001. [2]

Child care for infants is often difficult to find. To meet this need, Smart Start programs have created 56,455 additional child care spaces, including spaces for infants, since 1993. [3]

Smart Start = Progress

"Child care costs parents an average of $400 - 500 per month in N.C., depending on the age of the child. Parents who earn low wages and parents in school or job training programs need help in paying for child care. Smart Start is meeting these needs by helping centers and family child care homes serve more children, including adding spaces for special age groups and for families working extended hours." [2]

[1] Smart Start Services and Successes, FPG/UNC Evaluation Team Annual Report
[2] N.C. Division of Child Development
[3] FPG/UNC Smart Start quarterly report

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Child care

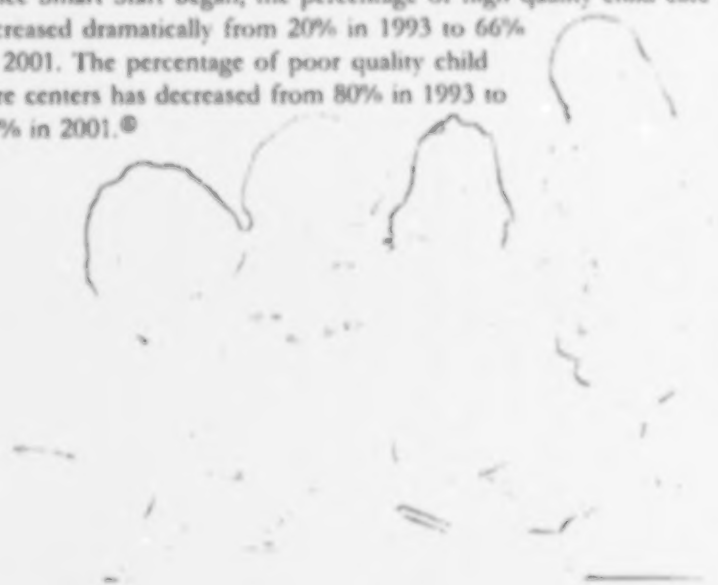
High quality child care increases school readiness and lowers future delinquency and crime rates, particularly for children of low income families.

✔ Smart Start improves the quality of child care

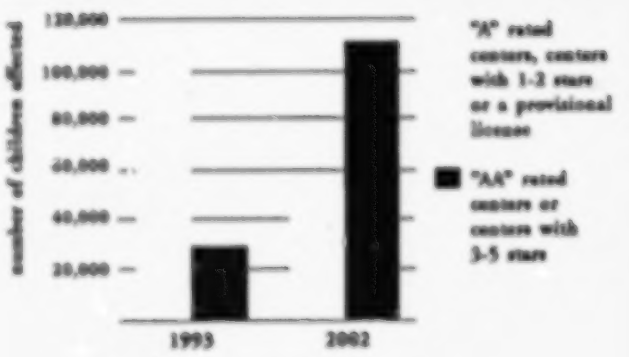
Family child care programs participating in Smart Start provide higher quality child care. ④

The quality of center-based care in N.C. has improved significantly over time because of Smart Start. Child care centers participating in more Smart Start quality improvement activities provide higher quality care. ⑤

Since Smart Start began, the percentage of high quality child care centers has increased dramatically from 20% in 1993 to 66% in 2001. The percentage of poor quality child care centers has decreased from 80% in 1993 to 34% in 2001. ⑥



Enrollment in minimum quality vs. higher quality child care ⑥



Effects of higher quality child care

Consistently, research shows that high quality child care contributes to early cognitive, language and social development. Specific results for children in high quality child care include:

- early competence in math and reading;
- positive social development with peers; and,
- better cooperation with adults. ⑦

④ Family Child Care in N.C., FPG/UNC Evaluation report
⑤ The Effects of Smart Start on the Quality of Child Care, FPG/UNC Evaluation report
⑥ N.C. Division of Child Development
⑦ From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development, National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, 2000

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Child care

Colleen Bostic is a Child Care Teacher at Method Child Development Center in Raleigh. Here's her story.

"My very first job in child care was working in a classroom with two-year-olds. That first week in the classroom was challenging! Working with young children is a lot of responsibility and I wasn't sure if I had made the right career decision. However, I knew I loved children so I decided to go back for week two. That was 23 years ago and I still love children. I continue to learn from the children while they're learning from me.

Thanks to Smart Start and the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarship program, I've recently been able to go back to school for my Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education, which I will complete next year. The classes have been very helpful and have taught me a lot of new information about the latest in early childhood research. I'm a parent and a grandparent, and had it not been for Smart Start, I would not have been able to afford school."

Educated early childhood teachers play a pivotal role in shaping children's social, emotional and cognitive development.

✔ Smart Start improves teacher education

In 2001, 83% of child care teachers had a college-level degree or received college credits—as compared to 41% in 1993.①

"High teacher turnover hurts kids and has long-lasting negative effects. The National Child Care Staffing Study found that higher staff turnover rates meant that children spent less time engaged in social activities with peers and more time in aimless wandering and scored lower on language development tests." ②

✔ Smart Start improves child care teacher retention

In 1993, 42% of child care teachers left their classroom within one-year. In 2001, 31% of child care teachers left their classroom within one year.①

Smart Start = Progress

Smart Start programs like the Child Care WAGES® Project and locally-designed education initiatives, as well as the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarship and health insurance programs, have been instrumental in increasing the education levels of child care teachers and lowering staff turnover.①

① Working in Child Care in N.C., 2001, Child Care Services Association
② The Early Childhood Education Career Development Ladder, Economic Opportunity Institute

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Child care

Smart START

Although wages for child care workers in N.C. are amongst the highest in the nation, their annual salary still does not exceed $16,000. As a result, child care workers are torn between their commitment to educate young children and their need to earn a living wage.

"Incremental gains have been made in the education, compensation and retention of the early childhood workforce in North Carolina over the last 10 years, but it is clear that we have a long way to go to ensure that our youngest children have teachers who are well-educated, paid fairly and remain in the field." ③

How do early childhood wages compare? ④
(mean hourly wage rate, 2001)

Flight Attendant	$20.52
Kindergarten Teacher	$17.04
Licensed Practical Nurse	$12.95
Bus Driver	$11.72
Animal Trainer	$10.17
☆ Child Care Teacher (N.C.)	$7.50
Parking Lot Attendant	$6.69
☆ Child Care Teacher (U.S.)	$6.61
☆ Family Child Care Provider (N.C.)	$5.57
☆ Family Child Care Provider (U.S.)	$3.94

③ Working in Child Care in N.C., 2001, Child Care Services Association
④ Urban Institute, 2001

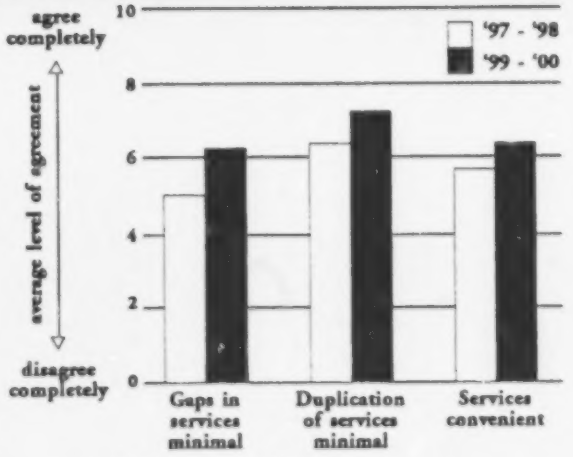
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Communities

"Sometimes an idea comes along that has such a profound impact on the quality of life and character of a community - Family Central in Ashe County is that idea.

Located in a former high school, Family Central nurtures the well-being of our community through the coordinated delivery of family services and expanded recreational opportunities. Family Central will house 13 family services' organizations, including Child Care Resource and Referral and the Red Cross. There is no better way to assist families than by providing easy access to needed services through the collaborative efforts of these agencies. This project would not have been possible without the local Smart Start agency - the Ashe County Partnership for Children. Community support for this project has been so strong that Ashe County has been able to raise $1.4 million in private funds to support the Family Central project." - Chris Robinson, Director of the Ashe and Alleghany campuses of Wilkes Community College

Improvements in the service system for young children ①



Collaboration among organizations improves efficiency, reduces duplication and saves tax dollars.

✔ Smart Start improves collaboration and coordination of child and family services

Smart Start has improved the coordination and effectiveness of local service agencies and programs that serve young children and their families. ①

Smart Start brings every North Carolina community together to identify and address the needs of their own children and families.

Smart Start = Progress

"We have a better handle on what each organization does. There is more contact and more information exchange between agencies because of Smart Start. Now we know about joint goals, make better referrals, and there's less duplication." - Mental Health Department, Developmental Disabilities Director ①

① Collaboration: A Smart Start Success, 2001, FPG/UNC Evaluation report

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Communities

Smart START

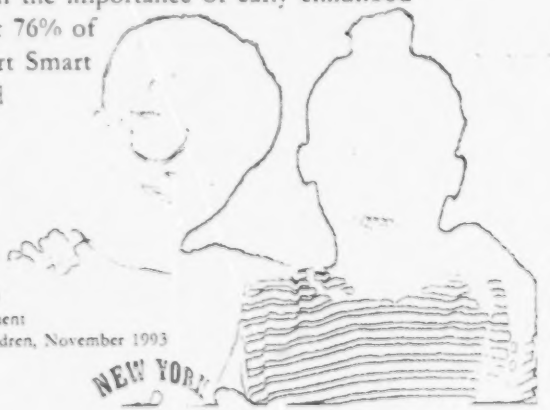
Today's young children are tomorrow's parents, workers and leaders.
Our future is dependent upon our investment in young children today.

✔ **Smart Start improves the quality and economy of N.C. communities**
Nearly $400 million has been added to the North Carolina economy through the creation of 56,455 additional child care spaces.

Smart Start child care subsidies allow families to work, adding nearly $590 million to our state's economy.

Nine out of ten police chiefs throughout the United States agree that "America could sharply reduce crime if government invested more in programs to help children and youth get a good start." ②

North Carolina believes in the importance of early childhood education. Polls show that 76% of North Carolinians support Smart Start and believe it should be continued. ③



② Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
③ Your Voice, Your Vote poll, 2000
④ N.C. Division of Child Development
⑤ Public Policy Report, Young Children, November 1993

A comparison reveals investing in Smart Start costs less ④
(average cost per participant)

☆ Smart Start at full funding	$1,633
Public School	$3,583
Community College	$3,629
State University	$9,848
State Prison	$20,932
Willie M Program	$37,006
Training School	$47,283

Long-term effects of preschool education

"The High/Scope Perry Preschool... study reveals that high-quality, active-learning programs for young children living in poverty:
- returns $7.16 for every dollar invested;
- cut in half participants' crime rate;
- significantly increased participants' earnings and property wealth as adults; and,
- significantly increase participants' commitment to marriage." ⑤

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Contributors

Gov. Mike Easley and former Gov. Jim Hunt joined Blue Cross and Blue Shield of N.C. (BCBSNC) CEO Bob Greczyn as Greczyn presented a $1.2 million check to Smart Start. BCBSNC and the N.C. Partnership for Children partnered for a yearlong statewide campaign to raise awareness of local Smart Start resources available to help North Carolina's children enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

"As the leader of a health care company and as a parent, I understand the importance of making investments at the right time in a child's life. Every parent wants their children to lead happy and successful lives. This program can help make that happen. That's what Smart Start is all about – making smart, timely investments in North Carolina's future." - Bob Greczyn

Everyone shares responsibility for our children's future. Our choices today shape the days to come. Thousands of donors have recognized the importance of early childhood education and donated to Smart Start to build a brighter future for all of North Carolina's children.

As an investment in our state, Smart Start harnesses money from government, foundations, businesses and individuals, and delivers it to the children of North Carolina. Smart Start is required by the North Carolina General Assembly to raise $1 for every $10 it receives in state funding.

- Since Smart Start began, more than $125 million in private support has been received. In addition, North Carolina citizens have contributed more than one million volunteer hours to Smart Start.
- Many of North Carolina's largest corporations have given their largest contributions to Smart Start. These are the people who best know the value of a good investment.
- More than 90% of all private contributions to Smart Start go directly to fund services for young children and families.

Please consider supporting North Carolina's children and future with a donation to Smart Start. It will take all of our efforts to assure the brightest future possible for all our children.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Contributors

$2+ Million

Atlantic Philanthropies
Bank of America
First Union Foundation
David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Wachovia

$1+ Million

AT&T
BB&T
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina
Carnegie Corporation
CP&L: a Progress Energy Company
Duke Energy
Food Lion
GlaxoSmithKline
IBM

$500,000 +

Appalachian Regional Commission
Bernhardt Industries
Cape Fear Memorial Foundation
Duke Endowment
Guilford Mills
Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
Park Foundation
R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

$200,000 +

Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
Centura Bank
A. J. Fletcher Foundation
Jefferson Pilot
W. K. Kellogg Foundation
Lowe's Companies
Rosie's For All Kids Foundation
Sara Lee
State Employees Combined Campaign
Surdna Foundation
US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Weyerhaeuser Corporation

$100,000 +

BellSouth Foundation
Blumenthal Foundation
Broyhill Foundation
Charles C. Cannon Foundation
Consolidated Diesel
Ford Foundation
Janirve Foundation
Kaplan Early Learning Company
Winston-Salem Foundation

$50,000 +

Albemarle Hospital
Catawba College
CBC/WRAL Community Fund of the Triangle Community Foundation
Hurley Foundation
Nortel Networks
Rajan Shamdasani
Roanoke-Chowan Foundation
Shelton Foundation
Sprint
Triangle Community Foundation
United Way of Central Carolinas, Incc.
United Way Success By 6 ®
US Dept. of Health and Human Services
Volvo Group North America
Weaver Foundation

$25,000+

Burlington Industries
City of Fayetteville
Cone Mills
Danforth Foundation
Hanes Foundation
Integon Corporation
Junior League of Raleigh
Laura and David Lisle
Piedmont Cheerwine Bottling Co.
Polk Community Foundation
Salisbury Community Foundation
Schindler Companies Ltd.
Sea-land Service

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Smart START

Authorizing Legislation: *"The General Assembly finds, upon consultation with the Governor, that every child can benefit from, and should have access to, high-quality early childhood education and development services. The economic future and well-being of the State depend upon it."* - July 1993

BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina

The printing of this publication is funded through the generosity of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina.

Help keep the promise

Voice your support

Call or write your elected officials and/or local newspaper. Speak up in support of parents, quality child care and ensuring children are ready for school. North Carolina's young children need you to ensure their success!

Become an e-advocate

Sign up with the Covenant with N.C.'s Children and periodically receive an electronic alert (e-mail) asking you to e-mail specific legislators before important decisions about children are made. To sign up, visit www.ncchild.org/covhome.htm

Contribute

Smart Start is involved in assisting parents and young children in your community. Contact your local partnership to discover the many ways that you can contribute to your Smart Start organization. To locate your nearest local Smart Start partnership, visit www.ncsmartstart.org/services/main.htm

N.C. Partnership for Children
1100 Wake Forest Road
Raleigh, N.C. 27604
919.821.7999
www.ncsmartstart.org

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Raleigh, N.C.
Permit No. 1338

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

☒ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☐ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").